

## FOLLOWERS OF CONFUCIUS

**Confucius** (551–479 B.C.E.)—a Chinese philosopher and teacher whose ideas and teachings influenced Chinese (and other Asian countries') government, society, and culture

**just**—lawful, fair

Confucius taught anyone who was willing and able to learn. By the time of his death, Confucius had taught more than 3,000 people.

Millions of people have studied or have been influenced by Confucianism since Confucius' death more than 2,000 years ago. Many believe Mencius to be the greatest Confucian scholar since Confucius.

Mencius lived from approximately 370 to 290 B.C.E. He was born about a century after Confucius' death. He was a great writer and through his writings (in particular, the *Mencius*) he was able to spread Confucian ideas. He especially emphasized two Confucian theories.

The first theory concerns the nature of human beings. Confucius and Mencius believed that all human beings are basically good.

The second theory is regarding the Mandate of Heaven and the relationship between rulers and the people they rule. The Mandate of Heaven is the idea that good rulers have the authority of Heaven to rule. Rulers are expected to be moral and just. In return, people are expected to obey their rulers. If the rulers are not moral and become corrupt, Confucians believe that the people who are ruled have the right to overthrow them. In ancient China, Heaven was not a place but rather a force that decided the destinies of all beings in the universe. When a ruler became weak or corrupt, it was believed that Heaven would take its mandate away and would pass it on to new and better rulers.

## GROUP TASK

1. With your group, discuss the paragraph. List the three most important points of the paragraph.
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2. Illustrate each point on a separate sheet of paper. Your illustrations will be added to the class timeline. You can include words on your illustrations. Make sure you write in large letters so that everyone in the room can see.
3. Include these points on your individual timelines.
4. Prepare a short presentation about your illustrations. Your presentation should include
  - a description of each illustration
  - its importance
  - the date (if used)